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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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THE RICHES OF GOD.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus."—Eph. ii. 4-7.

One of the most interesting studies in the New Testament is the progress of the development which may be traced in the mind of the Apostle Paul. From the time that he entered upon a Christian life to the time that he left it, there was in him, as there is or ought to be in every noble-minded person, a steady development and growth, so that the last part of his life was vastly richer than the earlier parts of it—more tender I mean. I do not refer to his conduct, for of that we know little; but there is reflected from his later writings a light purer, more transcendently elevated, than that which belonged to his earlier writings. For, whatever doctrine of inspiration you may hold, it is perfectly certain that inspiration always carries with it something of the material through which it acts, and that therefore human intelligence is a part of it, so that the laws of that intelligence are also taken into consideration. There is no such thing as a divine revelation or a divine inspiration which takes out of the divine nature, as it were, the picture of a truth, and puts it into the world without any human mixture. Material things are discovered to us through human organs; and the

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progress of knowing the things which we see or hear implies the exercise, the education, the finer development of the senses themselves. And that which is true of the lower nature or mind of man is still more true of the higher reason, which works through the moral sense, and perceives interior divine truths, which are as much higher than common truths as the soul is higher than the body.

Now, that part of the apostle's life, near its close, when he was writing in prison, was the most notable part. The studies, the scenes of labor, of a great many remarkable men have been preserved, and have been visited. I went to see where Jonathan Edwards wrote his *Treatise on the Will*, in old Stockbridge, and sat down in the chair that he used, and at the table where he worked. In Scotland, I went to the house where John Knox lived, and sat down in his study-room. I went, in Geneva, to the church where John Calvin preached, and went into the pulpit where he so many times stood. I should be glad if Bedford Jail were yet standing, and I could go into that, and see where it was that John Bunyan wrote his memorable *Pilgrim's Progress*. But of all places on earth, the one that I would first visit, if it were yet in existence, and I could, would be the sepulcher of the Saviour; and next to that would be the old Roman prison where Paul wrote. Dark, manacled, watched over by a soldier perpetually, he sent forth from that cold and desolate spot a light which has redeemed captivity, which has dissipated darkness, which has inspired manhood, which not only has made all mankind akin one to another, but has united this visible world with the invisible spiritual kingdom. And in the last letters which he wrote, during the closing years of his life, he was caught up, and rendered intensely conscious of the divine nature—of the riches that were in God, revealed through Christ. It was made still larger to his comprehension by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, which was given to him as it was given to all those who are prepared for it, and will take it. This was the direction in which his mind traveled as he grew richer, stronger, older (that is, younger; because the older we grow the nearer we are to being born into the spiritual world, which is the true birth). The nearer he

came to that world, the more experience he had, and the more it seemed to concentrate upon this thought—the exceeding riches of God in goodness, in grace, in mercy, in love, in kindness, in everything which we have a word to express in that direction.

Now, when I preach this view of God, unfolding the greatness of his goodness, I am cut short, often, in your thoughts, and in other people's criticisms, by the declaration that this is a truth which is true only to those who have complied with the conditions of salvation, and who are therefore Christians; and that preaching it generically, in distinction from preaching it to the "elect," is misusing Scripture. I wish to say a word on that point before I go on to the discussion of the real subject of this discourse.

We have among us an eminent English scientific man, Mr. Proctor, who is delivering lectures on Astronomy. Are those lectures for the drunken creatures that inhabit Five Points in New York, or are they not? If they are not for them, why are they not? They are for everybody who has the capacity or intelligence to take them in. They really come to the understanding of comparatively few; but they are just as much open to the reception of everybody else as to these few, if they can receive them. They are addressed to *whomsoever will*; but *whosoever will not*, and *whosoever can not*, have to stand aside, on account of the limitations of their education.

Now, the doctrine of the inherent universal nature of God is a doctrine of goodness and mercy and ineffable love. It is not a doctrine that God is ineffably kind and good to those who have been "elected," who have "made their calling and election sure," and who have come into the charmed circle inside of which God shines, and outside of which he does not; it is the doctrine of God's universal nature, which is appreciated by those who are called, just as a lecture is appreciated by those who are called. The intelligent understand the lecture, and the unintelligent do not, though it is as much for the unintelligent as for the intelligent.

God's nature is not specialized and parceled out. God's great attributes are not like legal documents, written and

sent by post to particular persons, none being allowed to take them out of the post-office except those whose names are on them. What God is, he is to all—or would be if they would understand him. The God of the whole earth is he. The universal Father is he. In him there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female. All are as one, in God.

Therefore the truth of the bountifulness and largeness of God's grace and goodness is true for everybody, provided everybody will put himself in a relation to take it. The reason why the sun produces in one place geraniums, camellias, azaleas, all forms of exquisite flowers, and does not produce them in another place, is not in the sun. The cause of the difference is in the use to which you put the sun. It shines on the south side of my barn ; and what does it produce there ? A warm spot, where chickens and cows gather. It shines on the south side of my neighbor's barn ; and what does it produce there ? Flowers and grapes. What is the reason of the difference ? Does the sun change ? No, but it is put to different uses. It is just the same sun, with just the same vivific power to all ; but its effects are different when it is differently employed. In one man's hands it amounts to nothing, because he does not make any use of it ; but in another man's hands it amounts to a great deal, because he does make use of it, and makes it do a great deal for him. The nature of God is the same to all men ; but the effects are not the same on all men, because they do not all put it to the same uses.

There is a sense in which every man may be said to make his own God. (I am now speaking of his conception of God. God is made by no one absolutely. In these times, however, it is necessary that we should walk very carefully, and explain ourselves at every step. We do not know what may happen !) Every man forms for himself his conception of God. He has helps, he has foregoing statements, he has analogies, he has reasonings, he has experiences ; but, after all, any person to whom God comes as a reality is one who, besides employing these instruments and aids, shapes them into a vital image or conception in his own mind.

God has never been seen. He has never revealed himself in chapters and sections. He is revealed, to be sure, in the popular use of that term, by words in Scripture ; but then these words are qualities, or signs of qualities, and it is necessary that we should have, or should have had, a spark of those qualities in our own selves in order to understand what the words mean. For instance, take the sentence, "God is just." If a man has never known justice in himself, or in others, the word does not mean anything to him. The interpretation of this word to a man is in the man's own knowledge or experience.

And so it is in forming a conception of God. Though it is revealed to us in Scripture terms, those terms themselves cannot be understood by us except so far as by personal experience, or by observation, which is a kind of experience, we have entered into the meaning of the word.

Now, to some extent God is revealed in the Old Testament, but not as exclusively as in the New. There are some things which make known the divine nature to the world as exquisite in the Old Testament as in the New ; but mainly in the Old Testament God is represented as being the regnant Power ; as having control over nature and over nations ; as conducting universal government, and maintaining the visible creation. And that was a true and appropriate view, for the human mind, in the earlier periods of the world, was occupied with physical experiences. The first struggle of the race has reference to outward conditions. First there are households ; households united constitute neighborhoods ; neighborhoods combined constitute States ; and States associated form nations or empires. Out of these inter-relations physical life is wrought. Social life comes close upon that. But the higher forms even of national life are slowly evolved. And the whole of human intelligence being occupied with these things in earlier civilization, the thoughts of men by which they frame a conception of God would naturally spring from these material elements. And as in the Bible God is always revealed on the principle of adaptation to want, you will find that the earlier revelations represent him as a God of administrative power—as a God of law and government.

In the New Testament, that is, in the fullness, in the ripeness of time, the other view of God having, as it were, been established—having grown by the stem, and made itself strong with ligneous development—now came the blossoming period ; and on that view of God as an administrator was developed the idea of a God of goodness, of gentleness, of sweetness, of patience, of suffering, of *longsuffering*, and of tenderness. Although those qualities existed to some small degree in antiquity, and their germs are plainly discernible here and there in the Older Revelation, yet they had then no such development as they have had in later times. Therefore, as we develop our conception of the Divine Being out of our experience and observation, it must needs follow that the finer and nobler traits of God's nature would appear at some interval, or in some sequence, after what we may call the framework of the divine personality had been laid. And the analogy would lead us to believe that the germs given to us of the interior disposition of God in the Old Testament will go on unfolding and producing in men noble qualities and traits, and that out of these traits and qualities, by the imagination (that is, by faith ; for faith is truth acting through the imagination), there will be transferred to God yet higher conceptions ; so that as the ages wear on the name of God will grow larger, and the contents of that name will be richer and more beneficent to the very end.

Paul's idea of God, then, was efflorescent and tropical. It grew in him all the way through his life. No longer to him was God a national God. The lowest idea of God is that he is a God of place. Jacob seems to have had that idea when he was running from the face of his angered brother, whom he had cheated, and when he lay down on a heap of stones, and slept, and God—or rather that which brought to him the idea of God—appeared to him ; so that when he awoke, he said, “Lo, God is here, and I knew it not.” He happened to go to sleep in a place where God lived, as he supposed.

Such was the early notion of God. But it was augmented in the conception of the Jews. They believed that he was the God of the Israelites—the God of all Israel. The Jews' conception of a national God was so strong that although they

enlarged it in one way they did not in another. They believed that the whole earth was to be swallowed up and become Jewish, and that then God would be the God of the whole earth. They firmly adhered to the thought that he was the God of the Jews. The idea that he would ever be the God of the Greeks, or of the outside world, never entered the Jewish mind. It was so repulsive to the Jews that it was enough to bring down a whole shower of arguments on the head of anybody who dared to advance it—arguments in the shape of stones. It was quite late before the idea entered the mind of the Jews—the apostolic Jews—that God was a God of the whole human family.

The idea of a God of salvation, as distinguished from a God of attributes and of legislative and executive powers, came still later. The conception of a God of ineffable dispositions; of a God such that, on being presented, the soul would fall in love with him; of a God so radiant and so beautiful that when once the vision of him rose before men they would rush toward it as children rush toward a meadow full of flowers and fruits; of a God so rich as to draw all men spontaneously to him by the inherent loveliness of his nature operating on human imagination and affection—that conception came a great deal later. You may well say that it came late, because it has not come yet, except in spots.

Do you ask me if I believe in election? I certainly do. I believe that some men are elected to be mathematicians, and some I *know* are not. I believe that some men are elected to be poets: some are not. Some men are elected to think with the perceptive faculties, and some are left out of that election. Some are elected to be thoughtful with the philosophical faculties, and others are not so elected.

Now, there are a great many men who are “elected.” That is, they are born of their mother and father with such moral susceptibilities that they can take in the idea of this soul-filling, soul-enriching and soul-rejoicing God. There are others that are born so that they can take it in but imperfectly, little by little, and only as the result of long-continued education. This is election—receptive capacity. It is inside election, not outside election.

The God that is ordinarily presented to men is not rich—except in the sense of property. He owns the world. California, and all the continent this side of it he owns. (To those in California that is the center of the world, and this is the fringe; but to us this is the center of the world, and that is the fringe. Everybody, every nation, is conceited ; and they think they live right at the navel, and that everything radiates from them in every direction.) He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. The heaven is his, and the earth is his. But these possessions do not make him rich, unless he is a man, and is susceptible of being enriched by physical things—as he is not. As he is taught in the majority of instances God is not rich to men's imagination ; nor to their sense of domestic delicacy ; nor to their sense of love, with all its endless inflections and variations ; nor to their sense of magnanimity ; nor to their sense of generosity ; nor to their sense of those finer traits which come later in the development of the human race, and grow finer, and involve in them a more perfect development of the higher faculties which belong to the human soul. Those traits in the divine nature are not properly apprehended. So I think I may say that the God whom men think of is very poor. We have impoverished God.

When I present to you the name of Astor, what do you think of ? Oh ! millions, and millions and millions of dollars. Money is what you think of in connection with him. When I present to you the name of Shakespeare what do you think of ? Not a dollar. Nobody ever thinks of any such thing when he is mentioned. In connection with his name we think of observation, of philosophy, of poetry, of all dramatic conceptions and perceptions. We think of a nature rich in those elements. When I present to you the name of Homer you have a sense of distinct associations as connected with that name. Names mean a multitude of things. When, going into the household, I present to you the name, *mother*, you are conscious not only that she was the author of your outward life, but that she has as much been the author of your inward life. There are some mothers who never wean their children. They are weaned by the mouth, but not by

the heart ; and they as much derive their life from mother or father when they are themselves fifty or sixty years of age, as they did when they were but five or six years old. And when you mention the name of such an one what does it bring to you ?

When one speaks the name of my mother, and says to me, "Roxana," it is no Greek that I think of ; it is she that was a Connecticut woman, bred in an obscure neighborhood, quiet and retiring, but full of deep pondering of things beyond her age, and of a heart rich and rare. And is there a person here who has not a name—somebody's name—which, when he hears it, distils a sweet influence upon his imagination, or rains down joyful emotive feelings on his heart ? These are familiar instances. Names? They are wonder-workers. A single name will send fire through twenty thousand men. A name? When the united armies of the North returned from the sad but necessary war with the South, and marched through Washington, and Sherman's name was sounded in their ear, what a heaven-rending shout went up ! Just one word was uttered ; but what an effect it produced !

Now, when I mention the name of God, what does it bring to you ? Catechism ; confession of faith ; doctrine ; abstract philosophy ; something that you are afraid of, and do not exactly know how, or why, or when, or where. Is there any other name so *unrich* to you, for the most part, as this ? Here and there have been souls with such a knowledge of Jesus Christ that to them his name was above every other name, in heaven and on earth : but take men collectively ; take a congregation like this (a congregation as well brought up, certainly, as any ordinary congregation ; better, you think ; but I guess you are a fair average of mankind), and when the name of God is propounded to them, what is it ? What is it to you ? A name that makes your soul quiver ?

When you are tried and worn and made sad by your business, and some one says to you, "Your wife and children expect you home early," how it rubs the wrinkles out of your brow!—I hope it does. You feel at once as though a strain

of music had come into your care and trouble. New thoughts and feelings are brought to you.

Now, when, in the midst of your cares and troubles, men say "God" to you, what does it do? Does it touch you? Is there anything in it to you? Does it shake down the dews of heaven upon you? Is there in it everything that is gentle, and tender, and sweet, and loving, and lovable? Does it mean all that you ought to be, and wish to be, and ten million times more? Does it represent to you One who has such love that he loves those who are in trespasses and sins? Did you ever read that sentence? I am afraid you have read other books more than you have the Bible.

"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins."

Is this the thought of God: that he is a Being who is so wonderful in love that when he looks out upon men, and sees them dead, *dead*, *DEAD* in sin, he not only pities them, and sorrows for them, and waits on them, but loves them?

How can God love a man that is in sin? I do not know; I should be more like God than I am now if I knew altogether; but I do know a little.

A wife has followed the husband of her youth through all his declining periods, till he has come to be a brute—a festering lump of sickness and wretchedness, and is as foul inside as he is loathsome outside. The father and mother forbid him the house; the neighbors consider him a repulsive thing; the whole community wish he was dead; but this one woman stands by him night and day, giving up everything she has—father, and mother, and children even—for his sake. She holds on to a life as full of misery as it can be packed, for no other reason than to try to take care of that poor fellow. And when at last he dies, and everybody says, "Thank God, the monster is gone," she says, "Oh! oh! oh! don't, don't, don't speak so. I loved him!"

Is there not such a love as that in a wife's heart—not in every instance, but in some instances? And where did she get it? There is a Fountain from which such experiences spring. Whoever has any noble trait gets it from God, who is rich.

What constitutes riches? I asked, in New Hampshire, how much it took to make a farmer rich there; and I was told that if a man was worth five thousand dollars he was considered rich. If a man had a good farm, and had ten thousand dollars out at interest, oh! he was very rich—*passing* rich. I dropped a little further down, into Concord, where some magnates of railroads live (they are the aristocrats just now), and I found that the idea of riches was quite different there. A man there was not considered rich unless he had a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, in pretty clear stuff—not hypothecated riches. I go to New York and ask men how much it takes to make one rich, and they say, “There never was a greater mistake made than that of supposing that five or six hundred thousand dollars make a man rich. What does that sum amount to?” I go into the upper circles of New York where millionaires, or men worth a million dollars or over, used to be considered rich; and there if a man is worth five or ten millions it is thought that he is *coming on*. It is said, “He will be rich one of these days.” When a man’s wealth amounts to fifty or a hundred millions he is very rich.

Now if such is the idea of riches in material things, what must riches be when you rise above the highest men to angels, and above angels to God? What must be the circuit which makes riches, when it reaches him? And when you apply this term, increscent, to the Divine nature, as it respects the qualities of love and mercy, what must riches be in God, the infinite, whose experiences are never less wide than infinity? What must be love and mercy, and their stores, when it is said that God is rich in them?

If a noble, heroic man is rich in a quality, carry it up into saintship, carry it up into angelhood, carry it up through principalities and powers and dominions; and then there is an infinite stretch before God is reached; but sweep it by faith on and on; and what must it be in him?

Now, is there any such conception of God in your mind, as that he is rich in grace, in love, in mercy, in tenderness, in forbearance, in patience, in delicacy, in fineness, in those rare things which make everybody tingle with admiration

when he sees them in some heroic nature? Does the name of God bring to you any such association as that? I do not mean to ask whether your God has a good deal of hand-power; I do not mean to ask whether he can make stars as boys make snowballs; I do not mean to ask whether he can think a good deal, and put thoughts together in endless magnificent logic; I do not mean anything of that sort; but is he rich in soul? Is he rich in those directions which Jesus Christ opened when he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and humbled himself, and willingly accepted death, and picked out, as it were, the worst death known to human nature—the death of the cross? Is he rich in the sense which was implied when Christ told his disciples that they were the strongest and noblest and best who were the slaves of men? Is he rich in those particulars to which the Saviour referred when he represented to his followers their duty, and pointed out the line of their growth, by taking a towel and washing their feet, and saying, “If I, your Lord and Master, do this, I do it to show you how much more it should be done by you”? Is there any such conception of riches in your idea of God?

What are the reasons, then, of this comparative poverty of conception in regard to the divine nature! One reason is, that men look more upon the external and less upon the internal revelation of God in nature, derived from human experiences. I believe that in our day God is revealing himself by the hands of natural philosophers. I will not take a narrow view of the office which is being performed by the thinking men of our time. I am not alarmed at what may be called the *personal infidelity* of these men. They are all workers together, though they do not know it.

Go with me into a silk factory, and take down one of the most exquisite pieces of silk, and unroll it. Oh, what a beautiful pattern! What exquisite colors! What fineness of texture! What magnificent figures! Why, it is charming!

Now, let us see how that is made. We will go back step by step till we come to the loom where it was woven. We see this machine, that does not know what it is doing, throwing

its shuttles by some operation which it cannot understand. Let us go further back. We see men in one of the rooms punching holes here and there in a pasteboard card, according to some plan which has been devised ; and these holes mean figures. When the fabric is put on the loom in the proper way, in certain places given colors and given threads come out, or do not come out, according to these holes. The idea that they have any relation to the making of that silk, or helping to make it, seems perfectly absurd. But go further back, and you will find men spinning silk, and working on little bits of thread ; and if you are told that they are making such a fabric as that, you say, "They are not ; they are spinning single threads." What they are doing has not the slightest relation, apparently, to the fabric. Go back further yet, and you will find men up to their elbows in nasty-looking dye-stuff, in a badly smelling room, and all smouched themselves. I say, "You recollect those exquisite colors which you saw : these men are making them." "These men making those colors ? Preposterous ! Absurd !" On going further back, we find boys and girls, six, eight or ten of them, winding up little bits of films from yellow cocoons. These boys and girls are talking and laughing with each other, and I say, "They are working for that silk fabric." "Do not tell me any such stuff as that !" I take you one step further back. We go into the cocoonery where there is craunching that sounds like rain falling on a roof, and I show you millions of little ugly-looking worms, and say, "These are the folks, after all, that are making the silk." "What ! these worms ?" "Yes, these worms."

Now, then, take a Christian, according to the ordinary acceptation of that term. A Christian in this world is—well, a minister, or a deacon, that knows all theology, and keeps Sunday, and observes all the proprieties of the sanctuary, and lives an admirable, blameless life, and holds the faith of the Church exactly right. Men look on such a man, and say, "There, that is what I call a regular churchman, and a good Christian man." I present to them Herbert Spencer ; and they say, "What ! that outrageous skeptic. Herbert Spencer ? He, mentioned in the same day with that

excellent Christian man—that admirable churchman?" I present to them John Stuart Mill. "Why!" they say, "he did not believe in a God, even." So those worms did not know that they were making silk. They did not believe in silk. If you had told them about silk they could not have understood you.

What fools you are! What a fool I am! What fools all men are! How preposterously we reason about things! Do you suppose everything in the world is going to run according to your pendulum? Is there not a common scheme which regulates the affairs of this globe? and are not all men working in obedience to that scheme, and working in their own way, God being the great Architect? Is not everybody working, whether he knows it or not, toward the final consummation of things.

There are riches in stellar discoveries, in chemical discoveries, in things that the microscope reveals, in things that the telescope reveals; and it matters very little to me whether individual workers, who are bringing about effects, and arriving at deductions, believe as the Jews did, as the Brahmins do, or as I do. So far as their work is concerned, they are working together in the cause of the world's progress. If religion is the truth of God in its essence and absolute reality, it never can be rubbed out; and I am not afraid. Those who work most to rub it out are often those who do most to diffuse it, and cleanse it, and bring it into power.

Nevertheless, when scientific men, in the earlier stages, work to bring out the truth of God, they of necessity work by the senses; they work with the exterior physical organs; and they bring out that truth of the divine nature which has relation to materiality. And if you have only what is called a *scientific God*—a God that presides over the alembic, over chemistry, over dynamics, over physical elements, you have a real God; but he is not a God that makes heaven rich and the earth musical.

When you go further, to those who teach the nature of God, the will of God, the law of God, and the government of God, these are often preached so out of all proportion that men come to conceive of God as really very much what Judge

Noah Davis is, sitting with books before him, a good and kind man personally, but not at all at liberty to use his goodness, and saying, "Here am I, gentlemen, to dispense justice. I am very sorry for that man ; but he has done wrong, and I can not stir an inch. I am bound to take the law and administer it on him." So men transfer to their conception of God that which, in the weakness of human administration, we are obliged to make use of, because no man is large enough to be intrusted with following his own feelings in judging men. But God is not such a Judge or Administrator as that. He is large enough to say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." His will and thought are adequate to every emergency and occasion. But still, we have a legal God presented to us.

Now, a man may admire justice, but no man ever loves it.

I heard one of my old friends—a rude man, with a great deal of soul-depth in his composition (for as when you break open stones you may find crystals, so, when you break him open, like a geode, you find that he is full of precious qualities)—I heard him say, "When my house was burning, I stood over across the way and looked at it without any very great trouble of mind ; I said, 'Thank God, that house burns as well as any rich man's.' I stood it very well (the tears ran down his cheeks as he said it) till I saw the bedroom burning, where my children were born, where the cradle was, and where I used to kneel down and pray. I cried then." He could see the garret and the cellar burn ; but when it came to burning the room where his children used to gather about him, that touched him. And so it is with our God. That side of God which deals with matter never draws men with more than admiration. It is that side of God which represents the social and the moral that develops not only admiration but attraction and love.

Then the mode in which God is presented to men for the sake of stopping them in evil and drawing them toward good takes away, substantially, from thousands of men, all power and all sweetness in the name of God.

There is the presentation of an idea which has almost be-

come a pulpit or theological custom—namely, that every faithful minister must first preach the Law to sinners ; that the law-work must be done on everybody first ; and that after that work is done, then everything that is in the Gospel may be introduced. If you run it back to its philosophy, it is this : that, as men are made, the only way to stop them from going wrong, and turn them back toward good, is to deal with their conscience ; to awaken their sense of fear ; to lay the rule of right and wrong on them. It is thought that when the consequences of wrong-doing are placed before them they will cease doing wrong, and retrace their steps. And when that operation has been performed on the subject he is ready to have another of a higher grade performed.

A doctor says of his patient, “ Give that first—it will take down the fever ; and when that has taken effect, and he has begun to get better, put in your quinine.”

So these men say, “ Let the fear-work, the conscience-work be done first ; and then put in love.”

Now, our seminaries, and a large proportion of our ministers, teach that ; and there is a certain element of truth in it ; but it is not the whole truth ; nor is it a good truth to proceed on, unless it is on the general principle of the “ foolishness of preaching.”

How is it with the family ? I hold that there is no family which is not better for having a stick in it. I think that must be a very foolish child that grows up without ever being whipped—that is, if I may take my own experience as a criterion. I would not be understood very literally in this matter. There are some children that really seem born in the wrong world, they are so good ; but as a general rule such children die early. Almost all saints among children die early. They do not hold out a great while. If they live they are not saints ; and if they are saints they do not live, for the most part. But now and then there are children of such a nature that you do not have to chastise them. Let me say, however, that it is not altogether owing to the nature of the child. It is due to the wisdom of the parent in a great measure.

Take a great wise-hearted mother, and give her all the

time she needs, and endow her with insight into character, and let her meet her one child at every single step so that before he knows it she is bringing influences to bear which change the operation of his thoughts and feelings, and she can bring him up without once smiting or coercing him.

But suppose she was a poor woman, with a very large brain, and a very small body, and therefore very nervously organized ; suppose she had twelve children ; and suppose she could not get at any one of them more than about once a day, because she had to work for them all, early and late. People would say to her, perhaps, "Bring up your children by the use of moral suasion—that is the way." "Moral *nonsense!*" she very likely would say ; "I have to bring up my children as I can." In such a family as that, a whip is a very nice thing, whatever sentimentalists may say of it. I go in for the woman who, having brought up eight strapping boys, and brought them up well, on being asked, "How did you bring them up?" said, "I brought them up in the fear of God and the horsewhip."

There is a truth, therefore, in bringing up children by the use of love, and there is also a truth in bringing up children by the infliction of pain. Pain is medicinal, and very good, oftentimes.

Nevertheless,—looking all through the bringing up of the child in the family, till it is five, eight, ten, twelve, fifteen years of age, when it is beginning to feel all the germs of after life without any of the knowledges or experiences of after life, and tracing the conduct of the parent from beginning to end,—which predominates, fear and pain, or love, and patience, and gentleness and counsel ? Why, I tell you that a mother's heart does more in the bringing up of children, a million times, than a mother's hand, though the hand is sometimes quite busy. Both elements are there ; but as the child grows older, and he comes to have respect and veneration for his mother, he is stopped more from wrong-doing by reason of his mother's tenderness and his mother's tears than by reason of the authority which she exercises over him. Many and many a child is carried through exigencies of evil by a mother's love.

But it is said, "You must treat human nature first by law." If I had tried everything else to no purpose I should try law too ; but suppose I should proclaim this doctrine : "No man can do anything with stones unless he blasts them with powder"? I go on that theory in building my house. I have the stones brought to the spot ; some could be fitted and managed without breaking, and a hammer's blow would break most of the others ; but "No," I say to the workmen, "you know the doctrine. You must bore a hole in every stone, and put in powder. Observe the law first, blast them, and then you can go on and face them, and put them in their places."

I say, where you cannot break stone with a hammer, and where you cannot do anything else, why, then blast it with powder ; but do not be bound to that particular method when other better methods might be employed.

In teaching men about the moral nature of the government under which they live, I should deal with them according to circumstances. In the coarser elements of society undoubtedly there is to be a more vigorous appeal to the imagination, and a larger proportional use of fear ; but fear itself is only instrumental, and relative to the next higher element. You may find it wise to use fear for the sake of not having to use it next time. You may start with fear for the sake of by and by using higher motives. But any system of preaching which perpetually dwells on law, and divine vengeance, and God's justice (as distinguished from his love), and which steadily holds up from year to year in the congregation nothing higher than conscience, *conscience*, CONSCIENCE, although it means well, is a preaching that impoverishes God in the minds of the people. Out of such preaching can never come that notion of God which is the glory of the New Testament. A few persons may break through it, and find the Christ that is sent for them ; but the mass of men in the congregation will live and die without ever having come to the riches of the goodness and grace of God as they are represented through Jesus Christ.

There are other causes which tend to impoverish our conception of God, but I cannot pause to speak of them now.

I remark first, in closing, that everyone may measure the state which he is in by the feeling that the name of God brings to him ; by the memories, the associations, the loves, the hopes, the raptures that it excites in him.

God is the consummation of everything that is noble, beautiful and rare. Every quality that excites admiration in a generous or noble mind exists in God in infinite proportions and developments ; and the growth which you have made is manifested by the receptivity which is in you when the name of God is disclosed. Not only is it “a name above every name,” but it is a name that should bring to you thousands and thousands of the rarest and sweetest and noblest associations.

Below the old cathedral of Antwerp, I sat on the sidewalk ; and as beggars usually sit there, the passers-by looked queerly at me, to see what sort of a beggar I might be ; but as I asked no alms, and took none, no one spoke to me. I sat there, on a bit of wood, with the cathedral over against me. About the base of the great edifice were booths and trading shops—for in some parts of Europe they pollute their churches by building worldly houses, trafficking places, right up against the base. But at every quarter of an hour there rang out from the belfry far up in the air the sounds of, I should think, some twenty or thirty bells—sounds like silver—the finest and most exquisite sounds I ever heard, underlaid and enriched by the more sonorous tones of larger bells. In their whirls and combinations the air seemed to catch these sounds and spread them ; and it appeared as if all manner of little sprites and angel imps were dancing and floating in the air. When I think of that cathedral, I do not remember its walls, and its buttresses, and the people that were about its base, except that I have strange reminiscences of them in a generic way ; but I remember very distinctly the impressions made in me by the magnificent rush of sounds from that spire, lifted up above all noise of traffic, where no dirt or anything that would defile could reach, and yet descending to bless the toilers below with the sweetness and purity of those realms of the upper air.

What, then, is the name of God to you ? Is it doctrine ?

Is it the foundation of the church ? Is it the place below where the great congregation gather ? Or, is it the rush of melodious sounds of sweetness, and love, and goodness, and mercy, and patience, and long-suffering, and magnanimity, and pity ? Is it riches in these things that come sounding down to you from that great name, God ?

You can measure yourself, your growth, your state, by the report in yourself, by your own experience, when your heart turns toward the thought of God.

I remark, again, that the conceptions which we have of God are not exaggerated, though they are disproportionate. We are often told that in preaching we ought to have a proportional view of God. I say that that is simply impossible. You might as well say that we ought to have a proportional view of the stellar universe. When we do not know one in a million of stars, how can we tell whether they are baked, or half baked, or cast solid ? Who can take the statistics of the stars, and make any proportional statement with regard to them ?

Now as to God, we cannot understand a millionth part of his being. We can say that we understand the qualities of the divine nature ; we can say that we understand the direction in which it will lead us when we explore it ; but we cannot form a proportional view of God.

We are not, however, in any danger of exaggerating the divine goodness and love and mercy. If men say to me, "You preach a God of good nature and effeminate love," it is not true. I do not preach any such God as that. I do not preach a God of effeminate love. Of all things that are powerful, the love of God is the most so. It is a love that punishes as well as rewards. Down from the judgment-seat where God sits comes condemnation as well as approval. Flaming eyes and a brow of indignation as much belong to love as smiles and sweet caresses. Love has in it all the force and cogency that is needed for a vigorous and efficient administration. A mother's love is not inconsistent with a mother's wrath. And ah, the wrath of the mother ! What do you care for a shrew that does not care for you ? If she, with voice shrill and angry, scolds and storms at you, what

do you care for that? I do not care for the rebuke of those to whom I am indifferent and who are indifferent to me. It is when those that I love, and who love me, chastise and chide me, that I am grieved. The most terrible of all justice is love-justice. Heathen justice and brute justice, such as is generally attributed to God, is the poorest and meanest of all stuffs that were ever swept into the limbo of vanity. I preach no conception of a God that is not invested with vigor and power, and that has not in his love all that is needed for force, for the incarnation of justice, for the keeping away of harm from those whom he loves, and for restoring from their troubles those who must be restored as men are who have taken too much opium, by being smitten and made to walk. I preach no effeminate love. I preach a love that carries in it all that is necessary for the salvation of the race, if men will use it for restoration, and not for destruction.

You cannot exaggerate God's goodness. He is better than poets' songs have represented him. He is better than dying saints have imagined him to be. He is better than anything that it is possible for the thoughts of men to conceive. He is One that is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." When we shall "see him as he is," in the world that is to come, the reality will transcend any conception which we have formed; and the memory of that which we have conceived will pass away.

When I lived in the woods of Indiana, I used to hear a great deal of talk about the inflorescence of the prairies in spring. I tried to imagine what it was. I had never seen a prairie, and I was filled with curiosity to see one—especially at that season of the year when the flowers were in bloom, of which I had heard such glowing descriptions. I had to make up some sort of notion respecting them, and I did the best I could. I put my garden alongside of another; and I added several others to these; and then I thought of all the flowers they would contain; but it was a comparatively limited idea that I had in my mind. And I remember very well the morning when I first rode out upon a real rolling prairie. After passing through a piece of woods I struck it. The sun

was shining aslant—for it was about nine o'clock ; the dew was on the grass, and on the flowers ; and very soon I was out at sea—or the effect was the same as if I had been. I could see no timber in any direction. It looked as though the prairie went to a point where the sky touched it, in front, on the right, and on the left. The flowers covered every little swell and hill-side. It seemed as if all the flowers in creation had been collected there.

Instead of little bits of flower-beds here and there, there were vast stretches of flowers. Here was a patch of pansies a mile long ; there was a patch of tulips two or three miles long ; and here was a patch of phlox five or six miles long. Here were great quantities of one sort of flower, and there were great quantities of another sort. Further than the eye could reach the ground was covered with flowers. It looked as though the sun had dropped down upon the earth and stained everything with its colors. And it was easy to conceive that if I should go on, and on, and on, if I should travel all day, and to-morrow, and the next day, and next week, I should still find flowers. And oh, what was my garden-conception of a prairie compared with what I took in when I saw one ?

You build up your idea of God from the household, from the best persons you know, and from the highest experiences that you have had. You gather together on earth all those conceptions which to you make a heroic, noble, resplendent being, and the sum of these you call God. But how different is the idea which you have of him now from that which you will have of him when you see him as he is !

Do you know what emphasis there is in those words *When we shall see him as he is?* The things that are past will grow dim and die away. They will be taper-lights at most. But the glory, the majesty, the magnitude, the bounty, the sweetness, the transcendent riches of the divine Heart, will fill every soul that beholds God “as he is.” Silence will first reign ; and then rapture will break forth from each heart, and heaven will resound with shouts of the redeemed. No man can learn here what it will be to feel the full power of the goodness and love and mercy of the

heart of God that has cleansed his. But we are all traveling toward that great tropical Center.

When Kane was shut up in the north, two long winters passed in which he did not see a tree. He saw a few flowers under the edge of the glaciers, and he saw some birds that came from the south, and reminded him of summer down there ; but his was all an Arctic experience. When, however, he had abandoned his anchorage, and had set his face southward, and had reached the Greenland settlements, a considerable change had taken place in the temperature. When, having met the relief ships, he had started southward again, a greater change had taken place. When he got so far south that he could see the water unobstructed by ice the change was still greater. Gradually, as he came on, the air grew warmer, and the winds grew balmier. More and more as he neared the temperate zone, everything became benign. And when at last he came to where he could smell the land, how great was the change ! What a transition it must have been from an Arctic winter to a temperate summer ! But when, finally, the harbor of New York opened upon his vision,—and the green ground, the ample bowl for ships,—and thoughts and memories of his dear friends came hovering in upon him, who can tell what his feelings were ?

And when, over this stormy sea of life, from these winter scenes and experiences, the soul goes sailing, through warmer and brighter climes, up toward the summer-land, and at last enters the harbor of God, and receives an abundant and choral entrance, who can tell what his emotions will be ? Then, when those whom he has known and who have known him on earth greet him, when angels welcome him, and when he sees "as he is" God himself, who fills heaven with his presence and majesty and glory, the experience will be such as it hath not entered the heart of man to conceive.

Toward that land we are all going ; and what matters it that we suffer here ? What if we know anguish now and then ? What if we have disappointments ? What if ties are broken ? What if companions are separated ? What if parents and children are taken from each other ?

A poor working-man had no friend in the world except a

little child and a dog. The girl, that ever greeted him when he returned from his toil, died, and the dog was slain ; and he cursed God ; for life seemed to him no longer worth having. O atheist, standing over the grave of love, do not dare to say that love has gone out ! Love never goes out—never ! God has taken your child, and it waits for you to go and take it again in its more glorified form.

Dear friends, to whom life is solitary, you are crossing a desert on the other side of which are gardens, orchards, blessings transcendent ; and the scenes which you are passing through here will make it all the more blessed when you reach it. So be patient. Do not curse God and die, as the wicked wife told Job to do. Do not say, “The heavens are black, and covered with sackcloth.” Whom God loves he chastens, and he scourges every son whom he receives.

Then bear patiently your burdens and trials. I present to you a God who is better than your love ever conceived him to be. He is a Father who will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his children. Trust in him. Fill your imagination full of the blessedness of a God who is rich in goodness, and mercy, and love, and pity ; and then hold on your way, and bear without complaint the things which trouble you now.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O LORD our God, why should any go forth this morning, and pray that the sun may shine upon them, that has arisen and poured down its abundance over the earth? Why have we arisen ourselves, but that the light dawned, and called us from our sleep? Why should any go forth and stretch out their hands and ask for the air that they may breathe therein, when all around about the globe thou hast poured it forth abundantly, beyond the want of man and beast? And why should we draw near to thee and pray for the light of thy countenance and for the health of thy soul when thou hast filled the heavens and the universe where thy creatures are, and art everywhere, and art quickening and drawing men up toward the higher and better life? Why should we solicit thee who art perpetually soliciting us to recognize thee? Why should we ask thy bounties when thou art beseeching us to take thy mercies? Why should we implore thy visits when all our lives long thou hast stood at the door knocking, thy head wet with the dew of the night?

Rebuke us in love for our backwardness and unfaith. Rebuke us that we do not trust thee more than we do. Rebuke us that we bring barrenness to thee while thou art bringing to us perpetual bounty. For we are as the stones, and thou art as vines that creep over them. All beauty is upon them; but it is not of the stones; it is of thee, that dost cover them. Grant that we may feel that everything which we have comes from thy hand. Without thee, how dry we are, as sticks that lie in the field, homely and brown, till the sun makes them beautiful by shining upon them, and giving them its light. Grant that we may feel how poor and mean our life is of itself, but how glorious it becomes under the shining of God. How beautiful we may be when quickened by thy Spirit; and how exceeding beautiful we shall be when we have been fashioned and completed and made meet for our inheritance among the saints in glory!

Be pleased, O God, to accept our recognition of our low estate, and our conviction of our innumerable sins, which cannot be catalogued—sins of thought; sins of imagination; sins of too much or too little feeling; sins of emptiness or of overfullness; sins of strength or of weakness wrongly placed. Thou knowest us altogether. Thou rememberest our frame. Thou knowest that we are but of the dust, and that we are struggling away from it—many, with feet very weary; many, upon paths that are very hard; many with easily besetting sins, that swarm in them as insects in morasses swarm about the unwary traveler. Thou knowest altogether our lot, and thou wilt not be unmindful of us. If our children were surrounded by a thousand troubles, how would our hearts melt for them! And art not thou better than we are? Does not thy heart yearn toward us? Art thou not helping us to break away from our sins and from our transgressions? Dost thou not hide them as behind the clouds? Dost thou not bury them and sink them deeper than the bottom of the sea? We rejoice in the kindness and the bounty of forgiveness that are in thy nature. Grant that we may have more and more a conception of the riches of the goodness that is in God, so that thy name may become a

name of power; a name of hope; a name of comfort; a name of inspiration; and so that we may live, not as to our own selves, but as to God, and as of God.

Bless, we pray thee, all that are in thy presence. Grant the desire of every heart, so far as that desire is for the good of each one. Teach all to pray so as that thy will may be done, and not theirs; for thou art the all-thinking, the all-knowing and the all-loving God; and thou seest all our life. It has been ordained from the beginning. The life of all creatures is predestinated. Thou hast laid the line along which the human soul shall develop from the beginning of things; and nothing hath interrupted nor checked its development along that line. Thou art still supervising and unfolding the same system as when the patriarchs trod the desert lands, and ages before; and thou wilt go on supervising and unfolding it to the end. We rejoice in this perpetuity. We rejoice that we may feel that we are living along the ways of God's marking out. Teach every one of us, therefore, to so submit himself to thee, that he may be made by thy will conformable to those great elements of purity, of holiness, of sanctification and of salvation, which thou hast had before thee as the termination of thine administration from the very beginning. We rejoice in the far future. Death itself will be blessed to us if it shall bring us to thee, and to the consummation of that which we shall behold in thy person.

Take away from every one, we pray thee, the fear of things present or of things to come; for if God be for us who can be against us? If nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, what have we to fear? Oh, take not that away from us which is our hope, our shield, our armor of offence and of defence—thine own self; the love of Jesus Christ which passeth knowledge; the peace of God which passeth knowledge; and the presence of God which passeth all knowledge and all words.

We pray thy blessing to rest upon all those in our midst who are sick. Wilt thou comfort them in their sickness. Grant grace, mercy and peace to every one. Make thyself dearer and dearer unto every one. May all feel the tenderness of thy presence. May they feel the nursing hand of God. May his arm be as a father's arm, that lifts up the child that is weary with lying, and holds it in his bosom.

We pray that thou wilt teach every one who is sick unto death how to go down rejoicing to the very gate that shall lead him forth. May every one be willing to do as thy servant of old did when an angel took him from the prison at night, and the gate opened before their steps, and he was sent to find his own friends again. May those who are imprisoned in the body rejoice when the angel shall come, and shall lead them forth, and the gate shall open and let them out, that they may go to their own that are not here.

Grant, we pray thee, that thy blessing may come to all those who labor in word and doctrine. We thank thee that there are so many who are willing to give their time thus. We pray that their willingness may not come simply as a compliance with duty, but as an eager impulse. May they feel, "Woe is me if I do not labor for other men."

We pray for those who supervise our schools and mission labors;

and for those who teach, or otherwise help to carry on these schools. May the Spirit of God rest upon them. And may these schools be mighty to spread abroad the influences of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

We pray that the light of the Gospel may shine throughout the land. Bless the President of these United States, and all who are united to him in authority. Bless the Congress assembled. Bless the Legislatures assembled, or assembling. Bless all governors, judges and magistrates throughout this nation. We pray that our citizens may live lives full of industry, morality and piety. We pray that there may such truth, such justice, and such self-restraint that their bearing may have a salutary influence on men in other lands, so that those who are in bondage may know how, by a larger manhood, to break forth out of bondage. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt give such growth that there shall be no power in shackles to hold the growing nature. May men become free by becoming fuller and more full of the divine manhood.

So spread abroad thy kingdom everywhere, till the heavens shall descend, till the new heavens and the new earth in which are to dwell righteousness shall come, and all men shall see thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

O Lord! thou art greater than our thoughts of thee. Thou art to us more than we can speak. Thou dost also transcend our utmost conception. All of thy name that we can frame into words is but little; and all of thee that we can frame into emotions is still but little; and all that we can conceive of thee by the imagination is yet but very little. Beyond our thoughts and feelings and conceptions thou dost stretch endlessly and boundlessly. We look toward thee as men look toward the morning. Thou art our Sun; thou art our Light; thou art our Life. In thee-our life is hid. We do not understand the meaning of this; but our hearts are uplifted with gladness that we shall find its meaning to be so much more than that which is shadowed forth, though the shadow itself is transcendently better than all earthly joys and experiences. Be pleased, our Father, to show this more and more to us. Grant that we may learn more and more in life to live by being better. So draw us near to thee until there shall be that ear opened in the soul which can hear unutterable things; until that sight shall be quickened which can see invisible things; and until that susceptibility to truth shall be aroused which can take in the higher and nobler elements of life, so that we can here feel the first tremulous touches of heavenly joy. And thus we shall go onward and upward until we shall stand in Zion and before God. And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

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